



Office for Victims of Crime

September 1999

# OVC Fact Sheet

*Advocating for the Fair*

*Treatment of Crime Victims*

## What is the Office for Victims of Crime?

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) was created by the U.S. Department of Justice in 1983 and formally established by Congress in 1988 through an amendment to the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA). OVC provides Federal funds to support victim assistance and compensation programs around the country and advocates, through policy development, for the fair treatment of crime victims. OVC administers formula and discretionary grants for programs designed to benefit victims, provides training for diverse professionals who work with victims, develops projects to enhance victims' rights and services, and undertakes public education and awareness activities on behalf of crime victims.

### OVC's Mission

The mission of OVC is to enhance the Nation's capacity to assist crime victims and to provide leadership in changing attitudes, policies, and practices to promote justice and healing for all victims of crime. OVC accomplishes its mission in many different ways: administering the Crime Victims Fund, supporting direct services, providing training programs that reach diverse professionals across America, sponsoring demonstration projects with national impact, and publishing and disseminating publications that highlight promising practices in the effective treatment of crime victims that can be replicated throughout the country.

### Crime Victims Fund

A major responsibility of OVC is to administer the Crime Victims Fund, *which is derived, not from tax dollars, but from fines and penalties paid by Federal criminal offenders*. Nearly 90 percent of the money collected each year is distributed to States to help fund their victim assistance and compensation programs. These programs are the lifeline services that help many victims heal. Federal victim assistance funds help support more than 4,000 local victim services agencies, such as domestic violence shelters, children's advocacy centers, and rape treatment programs. Compensation funds available from OVC supplement State efforts to provide reimbursement to victims for out-of-pocket expenses resulting from crime, including medical and mental health counseling costs, lost wages, and funeral expenses. Since 1988, OVC has distributed more than \$3 billion to States to support victim services and compensation.

### OVC-Sponsored Training

OVC sponsors training on a variety of victims' issues for many different professions, including victim services providers, law enforcement, prosecutors, the judiciary, the clergy, and medical and mental health personnel. Training on victim/witness issues also is provided for 70 different Federal law enforcement agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Department of Defense, and the National Park Service.

### OVC's Direct Services

OVC's mission includes providing direct services to people victimized on Tribal or Federal lands, such as military bases and national parks, and American citizens victimized in foreign countries. OVC supports emergency funds to provide victims of Federal crimes with needed services, such as crisis counseling, temporary shelter, and travel expenses to court when these services are otherwise unavailable. The agency also sponsors victim assistance programs in Indian Country, including the establishment and training of multidisciplinary teams to handle child sexual abuse cases and provide comprehensive victim services.

### OVC's Discretionary Grants

Through discretionary grants, OVC has initiated many innovative projects that will have a national impact. For example, the Victim Services 2000 demonstration sites in Denver, Colorado; Medina County, Ohio; and the State of Vermont are working toward creating an integrated, seamless system of service delivery. OVC also has funded important reports on civil legal remedies for victims, model antistalking laws, exemplary corrections programs that assist victims and train victim advocates, and protocols for handling offenses on Tribal lands. In addition, OVC has developed numerous training curricula addressing subjects such as hate crimes, elder abuse, and the role of the clergy in assisting victims. Other OVC-funded projects include a manual for developing Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner programs and monographs, bulletins, and videotapes designed to improve the criminal justice response to child victims.

## OVC's Resource Center

OVC established the Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center (OVCRC), an information clearinghouse which provides research findings, statistics, and literature on emerging victim issues. OVCRC is a component of the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), the most comprehensive criminal justice library in the world. Through this resource, information is available 24 hours a day through the Internet and Fax-on-Demand. The NCJRS World Wide Web Justice Information Center menus provide information and publications from all Office of Justice Programs agencies — the Office for Victims of Crime, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the Bureau of Justice Assistance — as well as from the Office of National Drug Control Policy. For more information and help with online services, first-time users can send an e-mail message to [look@ncjrs.org](mailto:look@ncjrs.org), or if technical assistance or specific questions on criminal and juvenile justice topics is required, query [askncjrs@ncjrs.org](mailto:askncjrs@ncjrs.org). Additionally, selected publications can be obtained through the Fax-on-Demand system.

## Training and Technical Assistance Center

OVC has established the Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC) to serve as a centralized access point for information about OVC's training and technical assistance resources. TTAC allows OVC to further disseminate training and technical assistance developed under its discretionary grant program. TTAC activities include:

- Providing expert consultants, who specialize in crime victim-related areas, to support training events of Federal, State,

Tribal, and local agencies and special emphasis organizations that are involved in activities related to crime victims.

- Providing intensive onsite technical assistance to meet specific programmatic and administrative requirements of agencies offering services to crime victims.
- Organizing, arranging, and facilitating national conferences, regional workshops, and meetings with diverse constituent groups, including State VOCA administrators and OVC discretionary grantees.
- Planning focus groups that develop action plans to respond to major emerging issues.
- Developing publications and other materials, such as brochures, briefing materials, and information packets on crime victim-related issues. This activity may include the adaptation and modification of existing materials to make them suitable for various user groups.
- Promoting information sharing and networking opportunities for administrators and leaders of similar agencies in an effort to improve response to crime victims.

**For more information about the Office for Victims of Crime and its programs, contact:**

OVC ..... 202-307-5983  
OVC Web Site ..... <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/>  
OVC Resource Center ..... 800-627-6872  
OVC Resource Center Web Site ..... <http://www.ncjrs.org>  
OVC Training and Technical  
Assistance Center ..... 800-627-6872

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